

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 If a tracking pattern superimposed on print data
is discriminated, a malicious user may tamper the
pattern, resulting in a deterioration in the reliability
of the tracking pattern itself. According to this
invention, therefore, a tracking pattern generating unit
generates a tracking pattern, and a data addition
processing unit adds the tracking pattern to image data.
An encryption processing unit encrypts the image data to
10 which the tracking pattern is added to make it difficult
to detect that the tracking pattern is added, and
transmits the resultant data to a printing apparatus.
This makes it difficult to discriminate the tracking
pattern from the image data, thus providing the highly
15 reliable tracking pattern.